

WOMEN, BUSINESS AND THE LAW 2021

European Commission

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June 7, 2021



Women, Business and the Law tracks 8 indicators around how laws impact women's careers and lives.

Mobility



Pay



Parenthood



Assets



Workplace



Marriage



Entrepreneurship

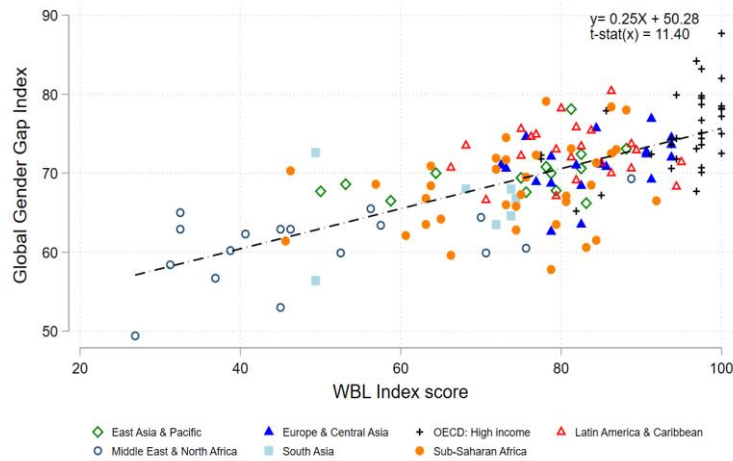


Pension

Gender equality is smart economics

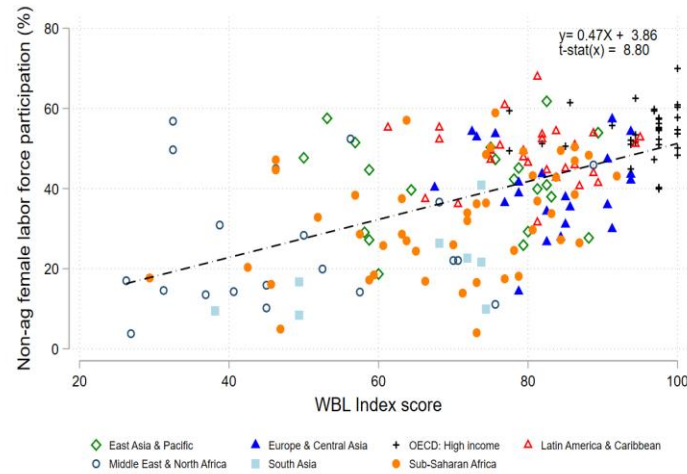


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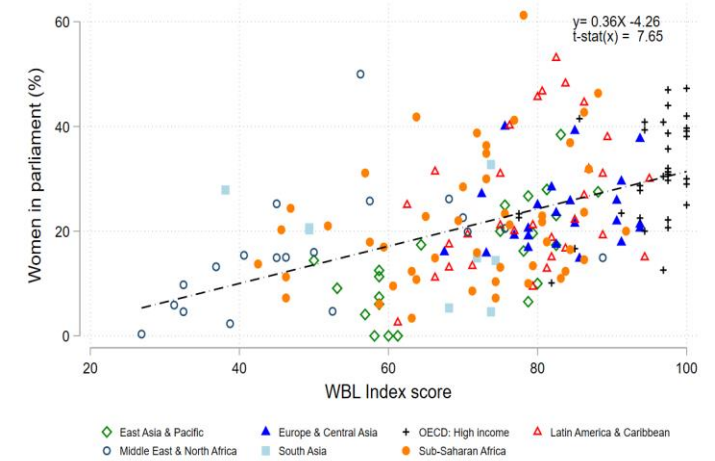
Narrowing gender gap in development outcomes

2

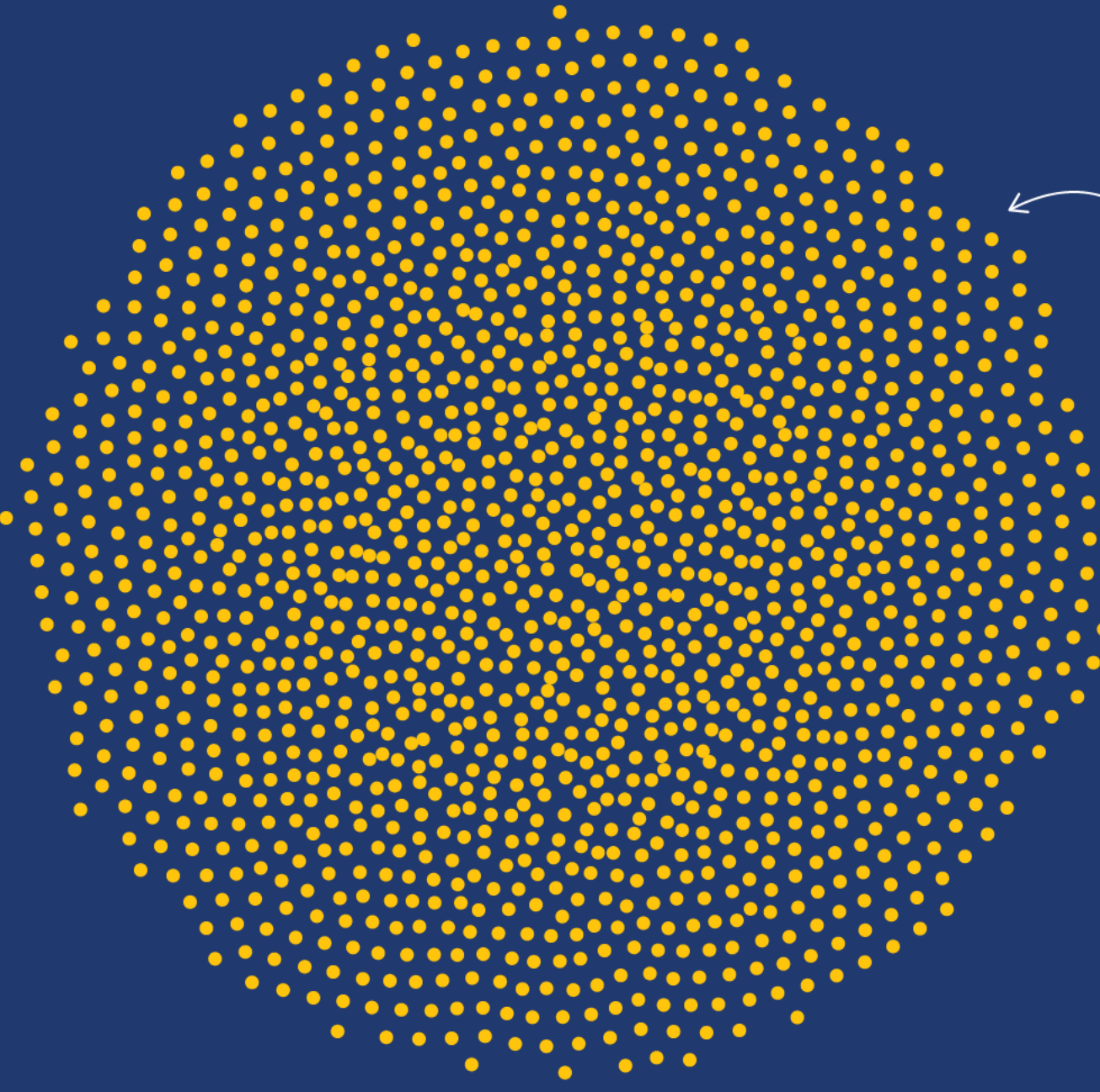


Higher female labor force participation

3



More female parliamentarians

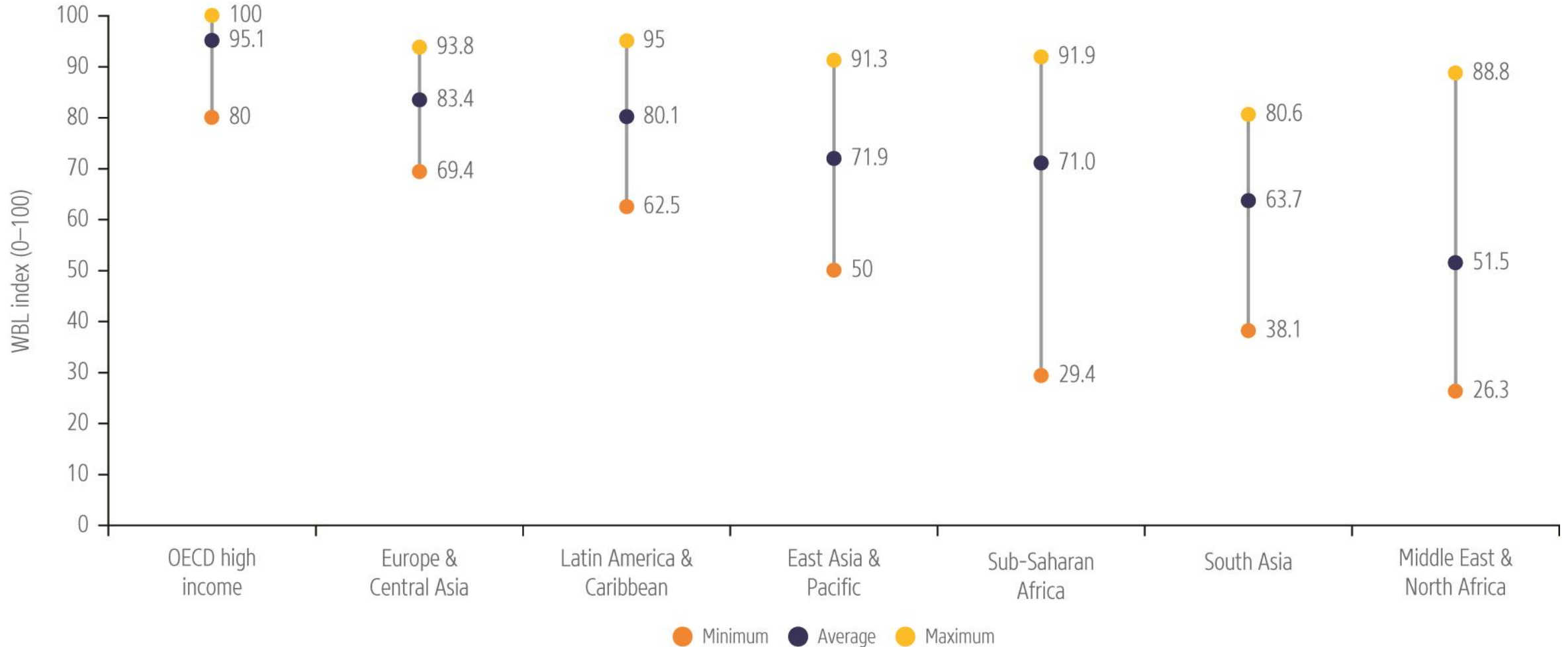


Globally, there have been **1,500 legal gender reforms** since 1970.

But it's not enough.

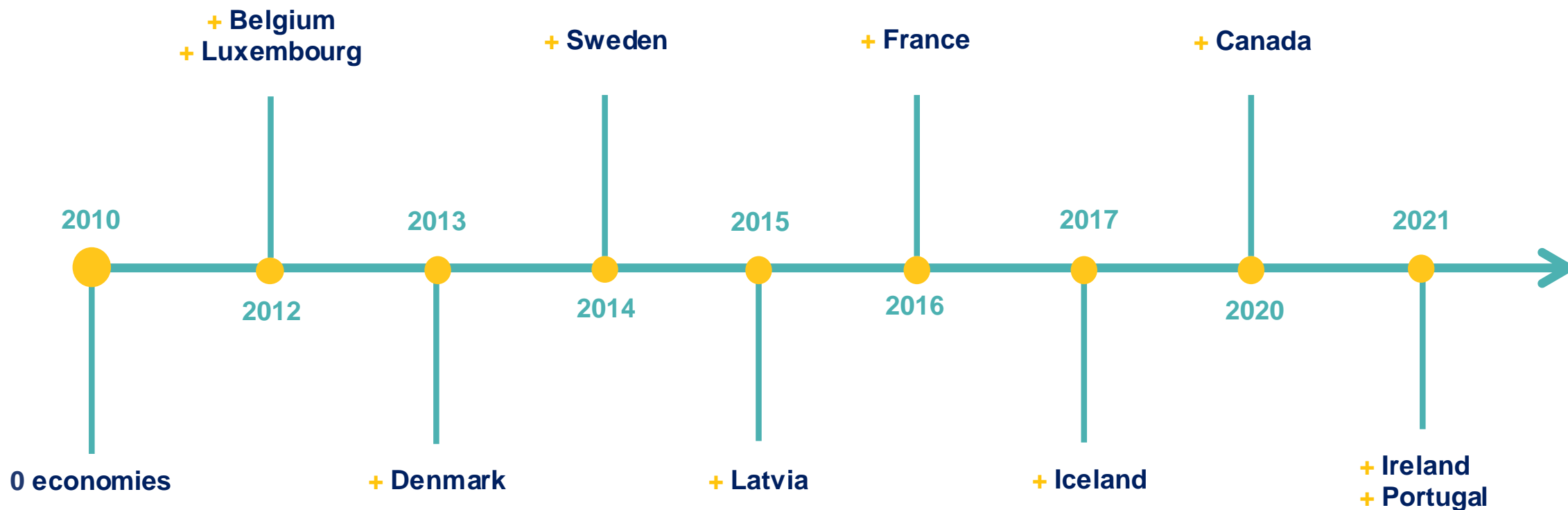
Women have only **76%** of the legal rights afforded to men.

Progress toward equality is uneven around the world



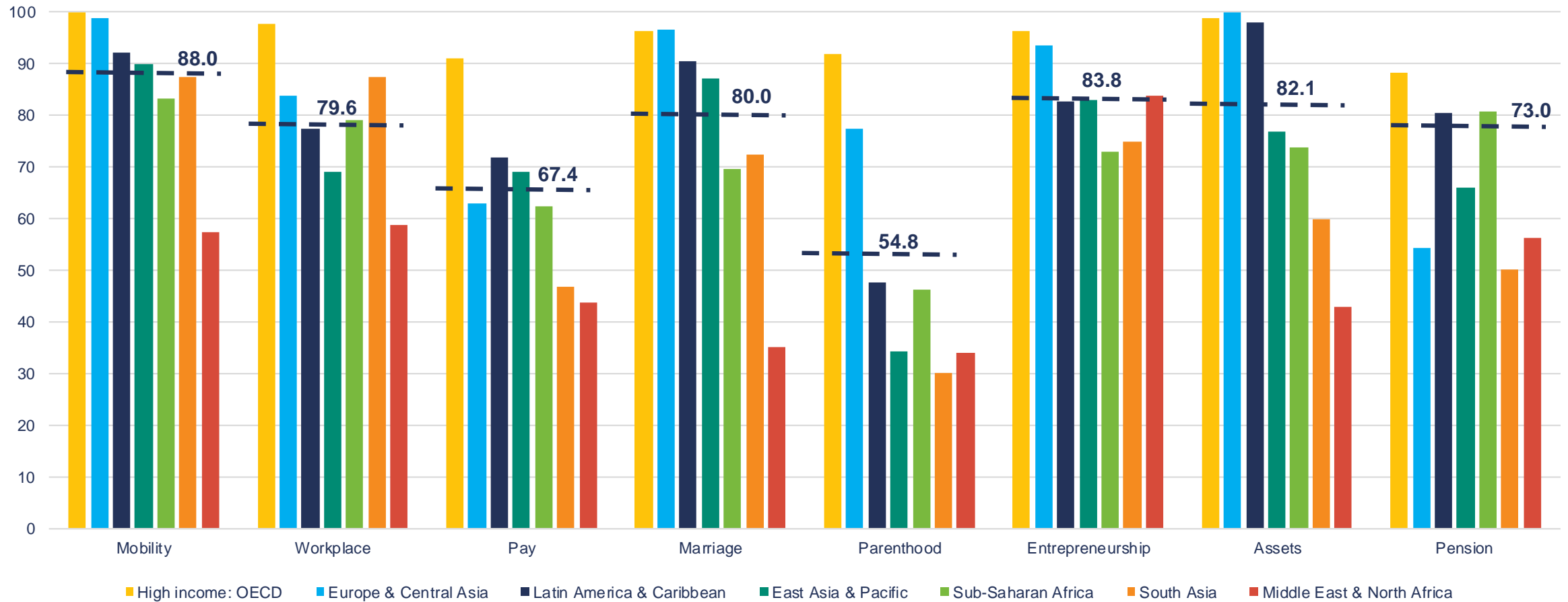


Today, 10 economies score 100





Lowest scores are on pay and parenthood





Economies around the world are reforming

Indicator	Data points changed	Economies
<i>Mobility</i>	6	Benin, Fiji, Jordan, United Arab Emirates
<i>Workplace</i>	5	Marshall Islands, Senegal, Sierra Leone, United Arab Emirates
<i>Pay</i>	11	Bahrain, Costa Rica, Marshall Islands, Montenegro, New Zealand, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, Vietnam
<i>Marriage</i>	7	Chile, Kuwait, Madagascar, Portugal, Puerto Rico, Rwanda, United Arab Emirates
<i>Parenthood</i>	8	Austria, Ethiopia, Ireland, Suriname, United Arab Emirates
<i>Entrepreneurship</i>	5	Bahrain, Jordan, Marshall Islands, Pakistan, Uzbekistan
<i>Pension</i>	3	Bahrain, Brazil, Slovenia
<i>Assets</i>	-	-
Total	45	27



PARENTHOOD

Laws affecting the ability of new parents to take time off work

A judge in Ghana ruled in 2018 that the dismissal of a pregnant worker was an "unwarranted, institutional onslaught on their fundamental human rights... to work and freedom from discrimination."

Source: CNN



38
countries
allow employers to
dismiss women for
being pregnant

Parenthood indicator has been the most popular area of reform



 Independent.ie

Three extra weeks of paid parental leave to become law

The Family Leave and Miscellaneous Provisions Bill 2021 will provide three extra weeks of paid leave to each parent to be taken in the first two ...

4 weeks ago



WIENER ZEITUNG  .at

FAMILIENPOLITIK

Papamonat tritt in Kraft

- Ab Sonntag, 1. September, haben alle Väter Anspruch auf den Papamonat.

vom 30.08.2019, 07:30 Uhr | Update: 30.08.2019, 07:35 Uhr

Suriname Herald

Voortaan maximaal 24 weken verlof bij zwangerschap

srherald.com/suriname/2019/04/12/voortaan-maximaal-24-weken-verlof-bij-zwangerschap/

April 12, 2019

All you need to know about UAE Paternity leave 2021

All you need to know about the UAE's parental leave allowance for fathers and mothers

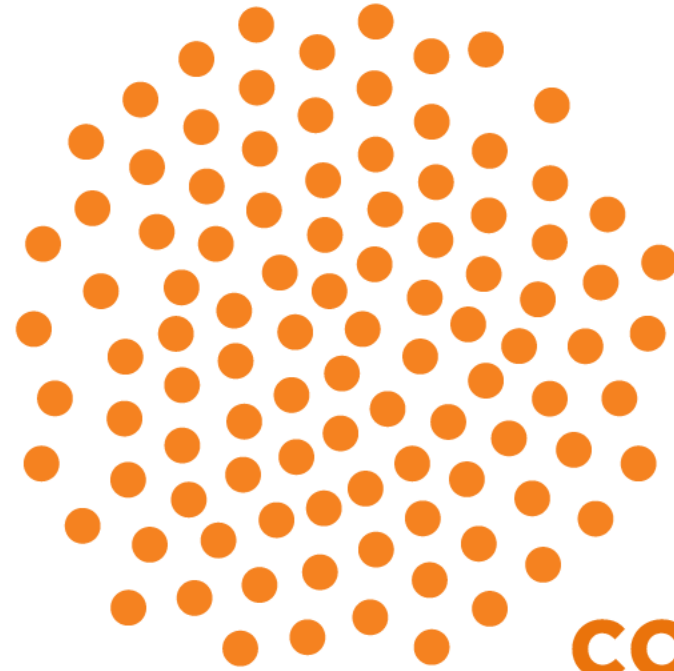


PAY

Laws and regulations affecting women's pay

Thanks to the Gender Equality Act 2019, every employer in the Marshall Islands must now give women and men equal pay for work of equal value.

Source: RMI Courts



100
countries

allow men to be compensated more than women for doing work of equal value

88 ECONOMIES FORBID WOMEN FROM WORKING CERTAIN JOBS

Europe and Central Asia economies have the longest lists of jobs prohibited for women.

Examples

Industry	Number of economies	Example
Agriculture	22	Skinning animals (<i>Lebanon</i>)
Construction	34	Working in industrial paint jobs (<i>Colombia</i>)
Energy	24	Exploratory drilling of oil and gas wells (<i>Russian Federation</i>)
Factories	47	Cleaning, lubricating, or adjusting any part of machinery (<i>Bangladesh</i>)
Mining	58	Working in any underground mine (<i>Sierra Leone</i>)
Transportation	17	Driving a railway, metro, or locomotive train; driving a bus with more than 14 seats (<i>Azerbaijan</i>)
Water	22	Working in jobs that require soaking body in dirty water (<i>Vietnam</i>)



MARRIAGE

Legal constraints related to marriage and divorce

Limiting women's right to remarry by setting a waiting period is a "symbol of arbitrary discrimination", according to Chile's Minister of Women and Gender Equality.

Source: CNN



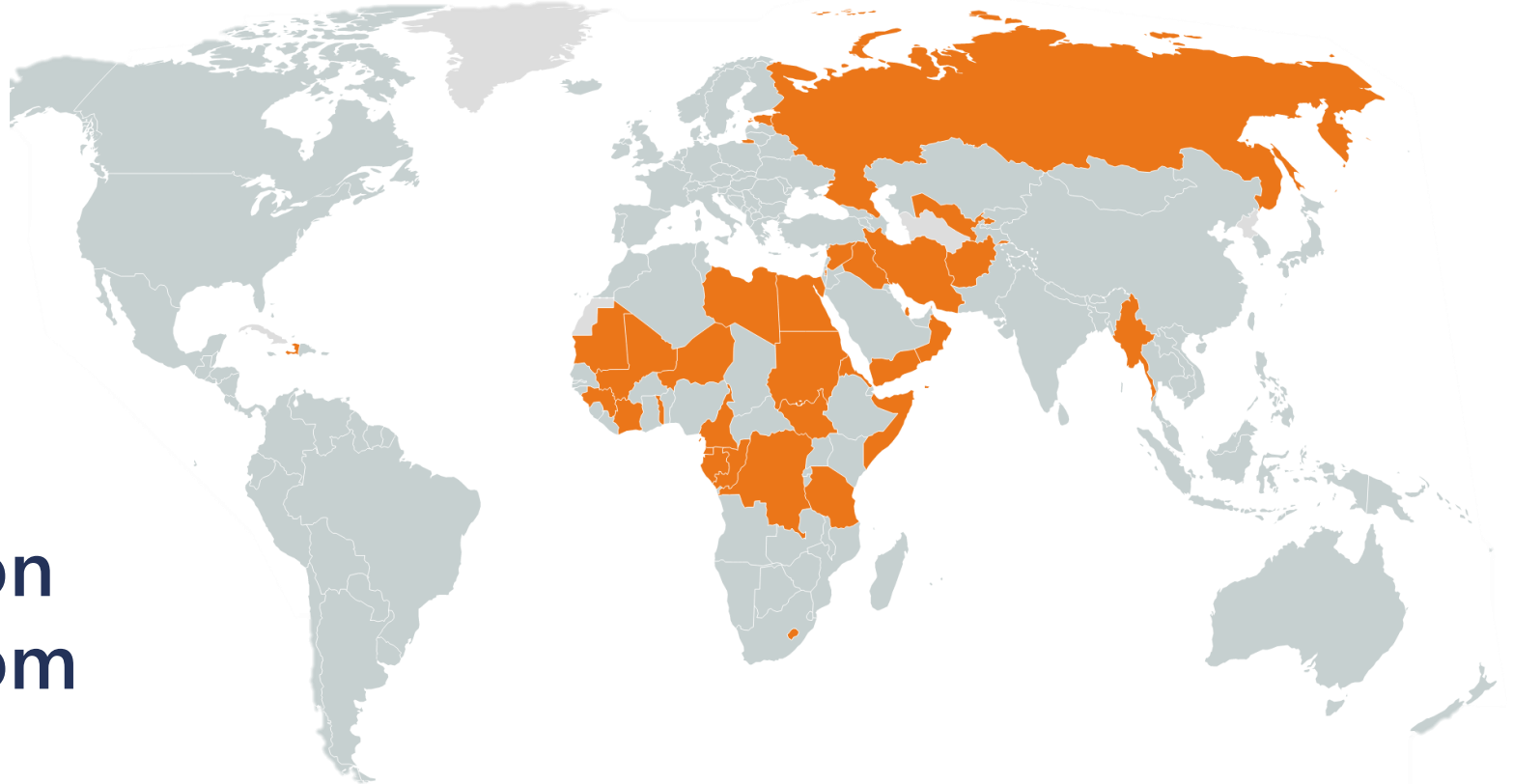
66
countries
still restrict women's
ability to remarry

Economies without domestic violence legislation



3
economies

2
Do not have legislation
protecting women from
domestic violence



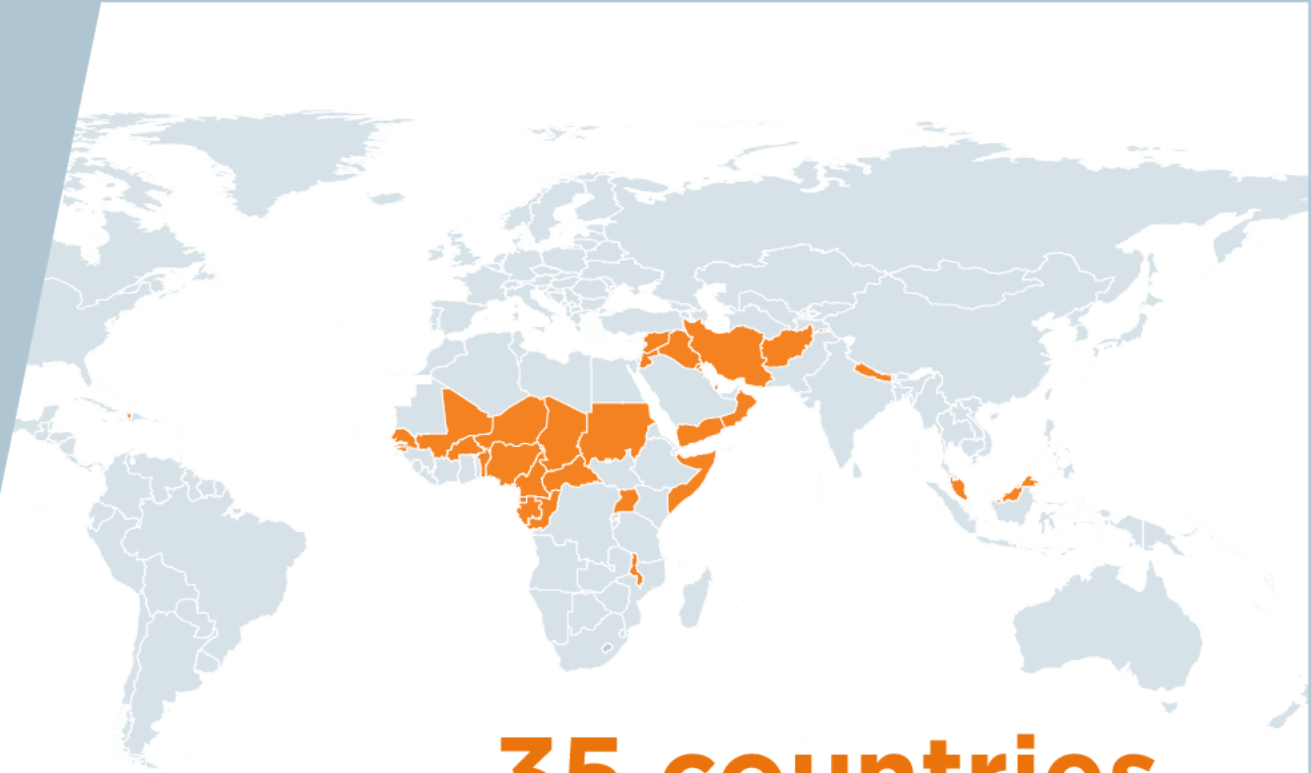


MOBILITY

Restrictions to women's freedom of movement

Removing restrictions on women's mobility enables more women to join the labor force and open their own businesses.

Source: Women, Business and the Law



35 countries

prevent women from choosing where to live in the same way as men



WORKPLACE

Laws affecting women's decisions to work and protections against sexual harassment

Thanks to the Barbados Employment Sexual Harassment (Prevention) Act 2017, every employer must have a clear written policy against sexual harassment.

Source: Nation News



countries

countries still do not have legislation on sexual harassment in employment including Japan



ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Constraints on women starting and running businesses

Laws that ensure equal access to credit, like the one adopted by Uzbekistan in 2019, create opportunities for initiatives that promote women's entrepreneurship.

Source: Women, Business and the Law



108
countries
still allow gender-based
discrimination in access
to credit



PENSION

Laws affecting women's retirement age and benefits

Guided by the principle of ensuring decent pension benefits in old age, Slovenia equalized the retirement age for men and women in 2020.

Source: Dnevnik



66
countries

still mandate that women retire earlier than men

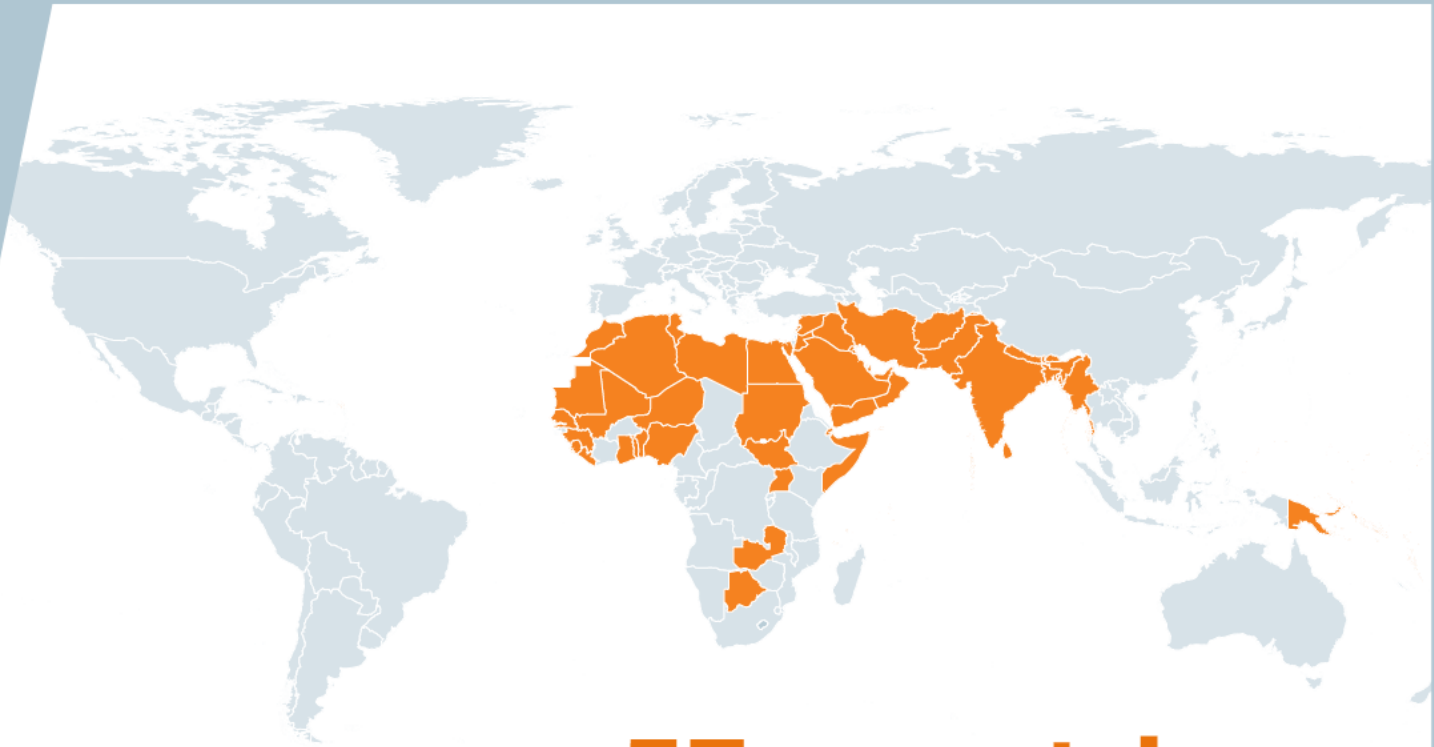


ASSETS

Gender differences in property and inheritance

During a landmark divorce ruling, a Chinese woman received a \$7,700 compensation that acknowledged housework as work.

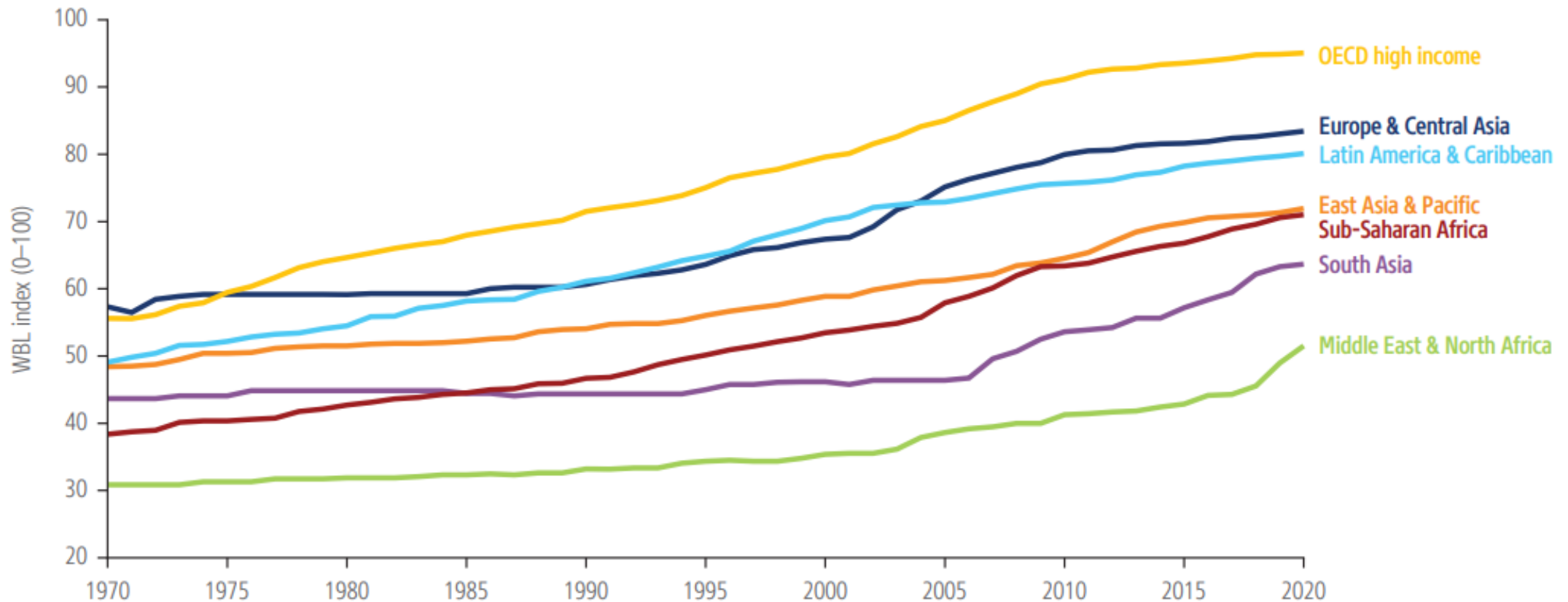
Source: NBC News



57 countries

do not recognize the value of non-monetary contributions

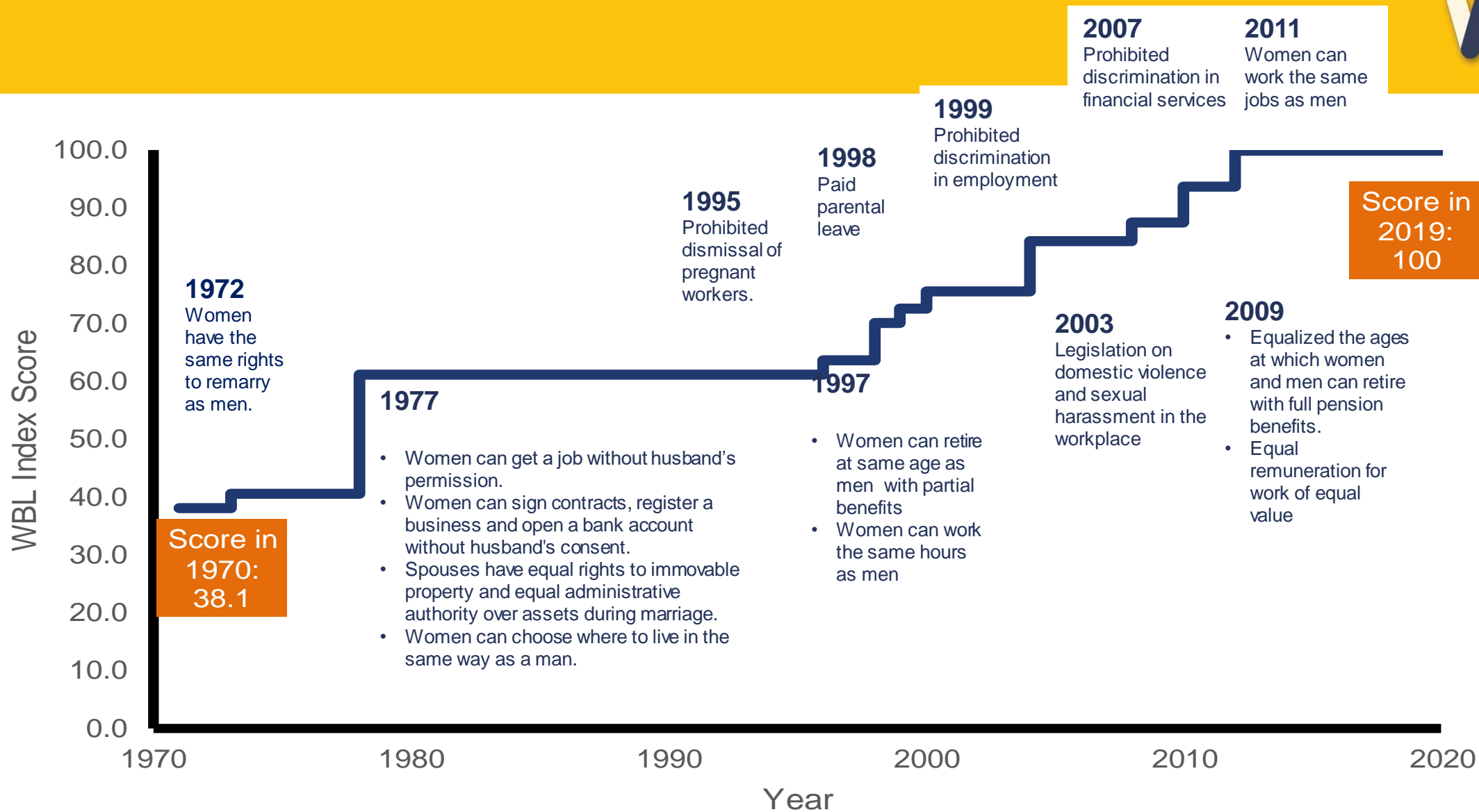
Over the last 50 years, all regions have improved but at different paces



Source: Women, Business and the Law (WBL) database.

Note: Figure shows change in the average WBL index score across seven regions between 1970 and 2020. OECD = Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development.

Countries like Belgium made big improvements in the last 50 years, with the score going from 38.2 to 100



Since 1970, scores on the Workplace and Parenthood indicators reformed the most



Governments must take urgent action to close the gender gap or risk worsening the effects of the pandemic



Addressing the gendered effects of COVID-19



Responding to the childcare crisis

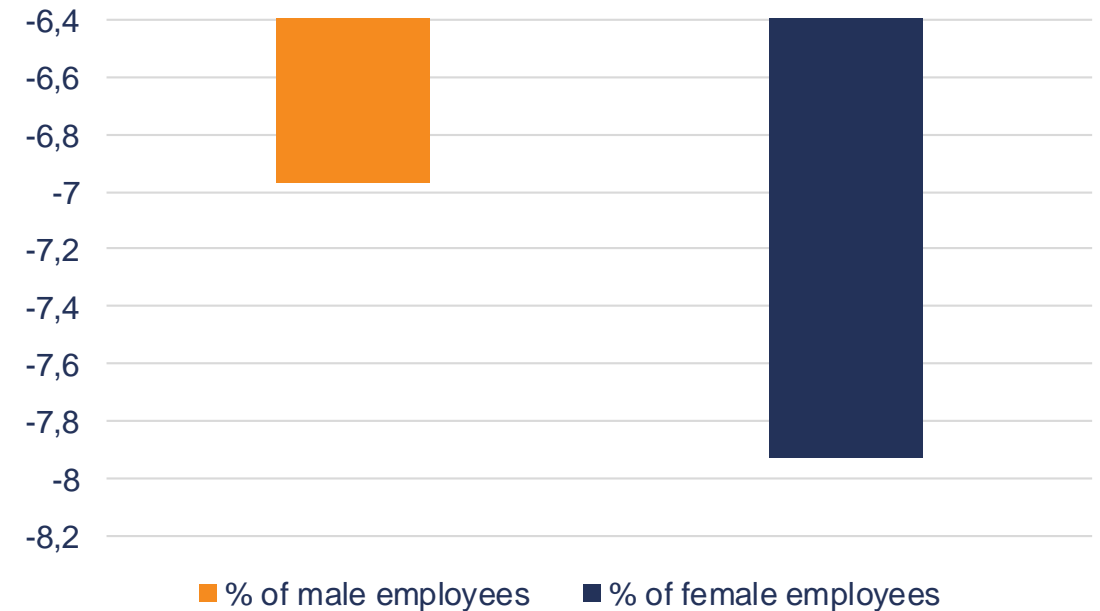


Accessing the court system



Protecting women's health and safety

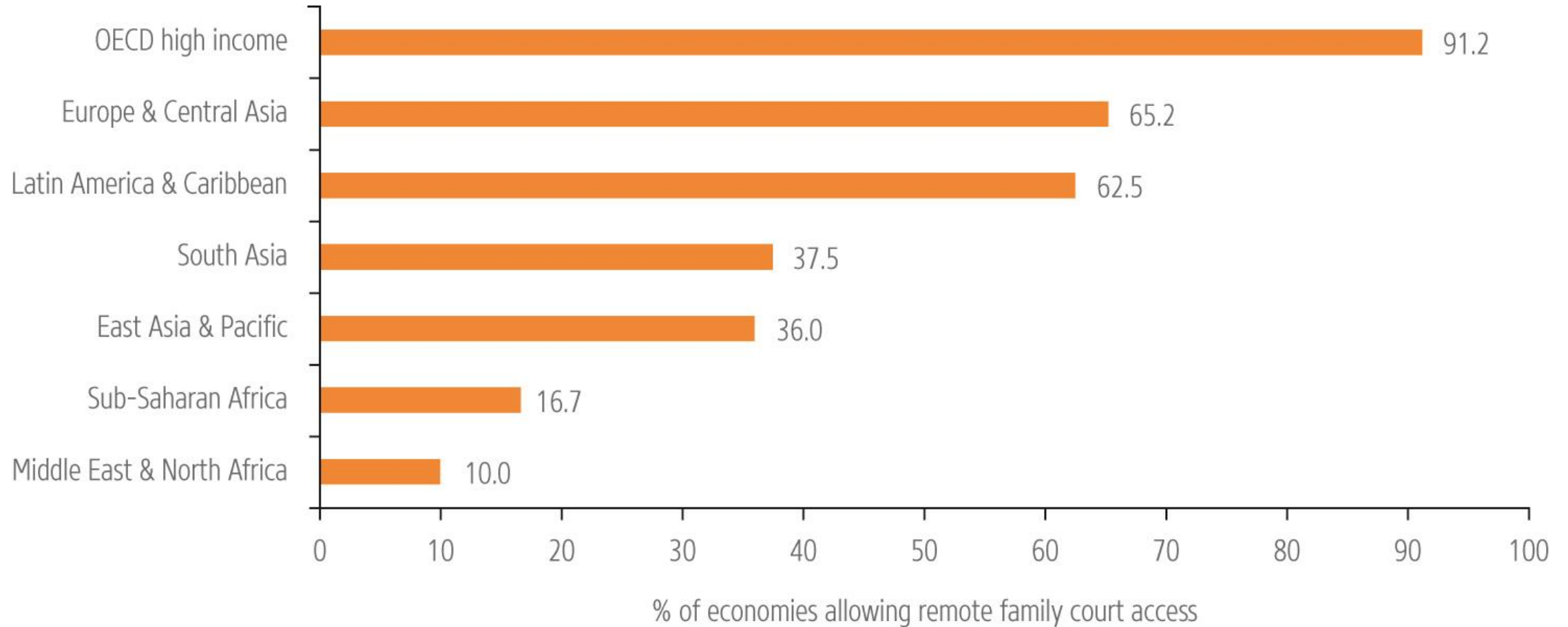
COVID-19 has led to a larger drop in female employment, selected economies



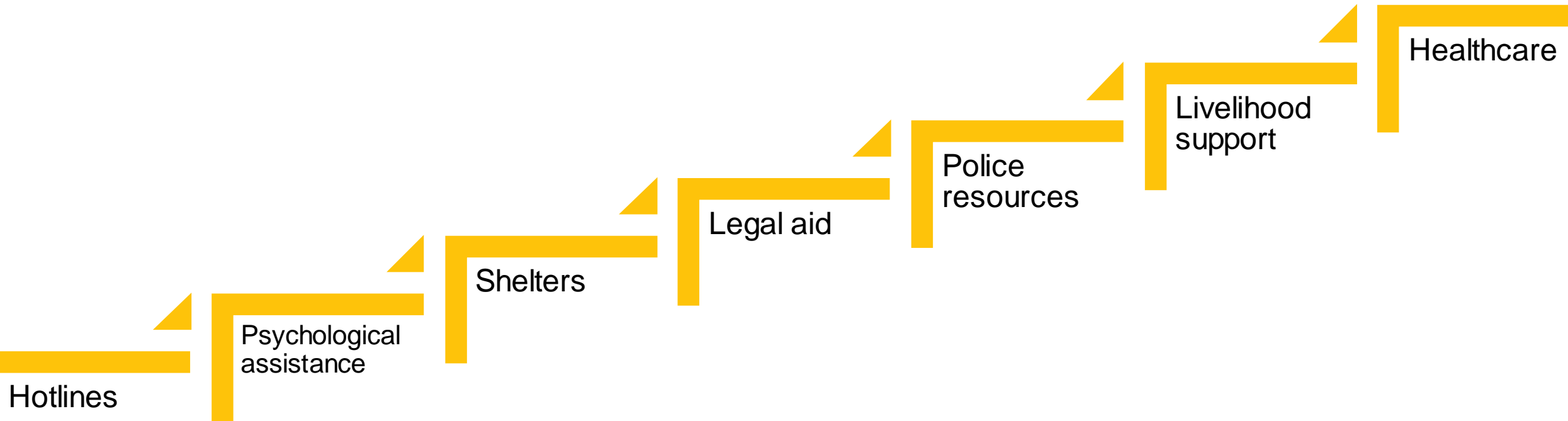
Some economies introduced innovative childcare assistance measures during the COVID-19 pandemic



Economies across all regions allowed remote access to family courts



Governments have also allocated resources and services to mitigate the impact of violence against women



Exploring new areas to remove inequalities in economic inclusion is crucial



Accessing **childcare** for women's economic opportunity



The role of the **justice** sector in legal implementation



Women, Business and the Law - wbl.worldbank.org

HOME DATA DATA VISUALIZATION REPORTS REFORMS METHODOLOGY RESEARCH LOCAL EXPERTS ABOUT US FAQs



Women, Business and the Law Data for 1971-2021

Explore trends over time with annual data for 190 economies during the period from 1970 to 2020 (reporting years 1971 to 2021).

[Download file \(Excel\)](#) | [Download file \(STATA\)](#)



Women, Business and the Law - COVID-19 Data

Women, Business and the Law added research questions related to policy measures introduced during the COVID-19 pandemic to its data collection questionnaires. Explore a data set covering three main areas: childcare measures, access to court systems, and safeguarding women's health and safety.

[Download file \(Excel\)](#)



Women, Business and the Law - Additional Data

Explore a data set of 14 non-scored questions (years 2017 and 2019), including data on child marriage, customary law, citizenship, sexual harassment, and access to ID cards.

[Download file \(Excel\)](#)



Women, Business and the Law - The Rights of Women with Disabilities

Explore a data set of 4 non-scored questions as part of the pilot research on the legal rights of women with disabilities in 176 economies. The research was developed with the support of the World Bank's Environmental and Social Framework Implementation Support Unit (ESF ISU).

[Download file \(Excel\)](#)

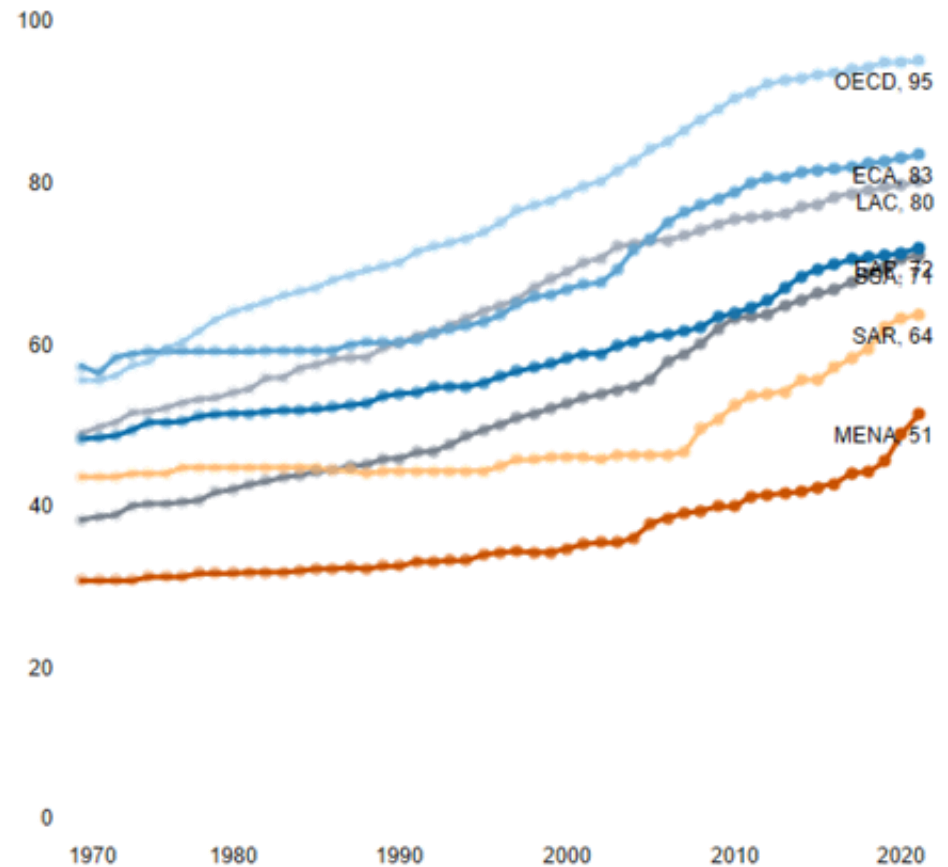
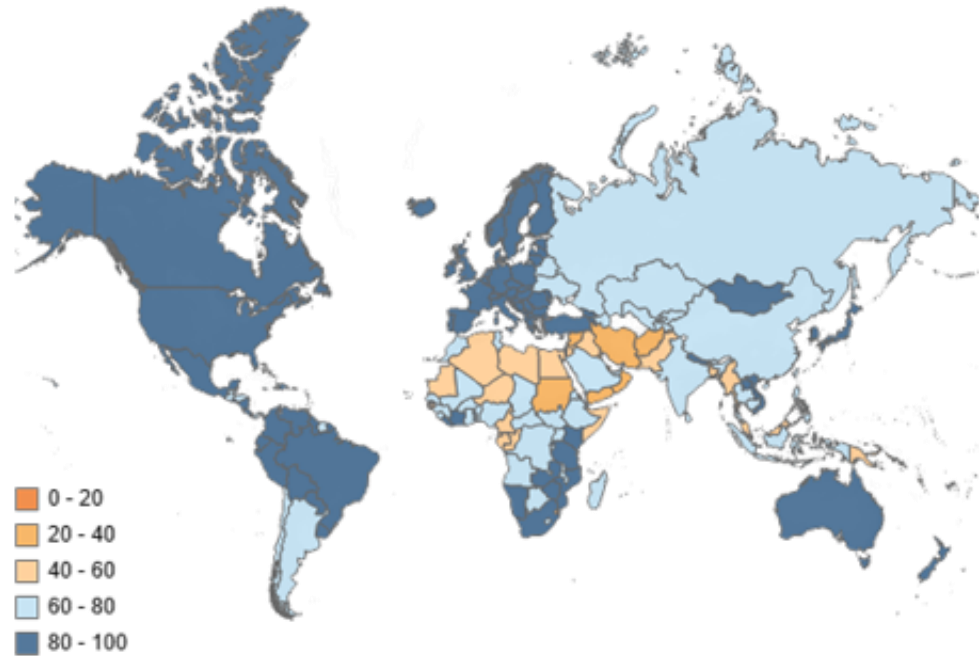
DOWNLOAD

- WBL **historical data** from 1971-2021.
- **COVID-19** data.
- **Additional data** on child marriage, customary law, citizenship, sexual harassment, and access to ID cards.
- Data on the rights of women with **disabilities**.

Learn more and take action at wbl.worldbank.org



WBL Index (2021) and progress over time



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